

AGENDA ITEM NO 13

WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL **EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL** **JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS**

HELD AT COUNTY HALL ON THURSDAY 14 MARCH 2002

Present:	Mrs S Denovan	-	Interim Head of SIS
	T Sadler	-	NAHT
	M Harrison	-	NUT
	B Knock	-	NUT
	A Madgett	-	NUT
	M Short	-	ATL
	J Hawkins	-	ATL
	I Phillips	-	NASUWT
In Attendance:	Mrs J Tagg	-	Head of Education Personnel (Schools)
	Mr C Stevens	-	Acting Head of PSS
	Ms T Glover	-	Head of Education Personnel (Centrally Employed Staff and Social Services)
	Mr C Nock	-	CFL Project Manager

01 / 02 Apologies

A S Leggate, M Addleton, A Batterham, M Trobe, Mrs J Breen

02 / 02 Minutes

M Short pointed out that the heading of the minutes was incorrect as the Education Committee had ceased to exist and was now the Education Advisory Panel.

Other amendments to be made were as follows:

Page 1, para. 2 – second sentence should be amended to read ‘ He said that the JCC for Teachers had enjoyed a very constructive and professional relationship’ (ie removal of ‘always’).

Page 2, para 2 – last sentence – apostrophe moved ie Associations’.

Page 5, para 4 – fourth sentence should be amended to read ‘ This was accepted as suitable as the term children would not cover all of school age’ (ie *not* added).

Page 6, para 4 – M Short felt that the wording did not reflect the theme of the point discussed– it was agreed between M Short and S Denovan that this should read ‘ M

Short said that he would like to make a few responses on this item. WASSH and PHF had opportunities and structures to ensure consultation, but there were some matters on which it would be more appropriate to consult with SHA or NAHT.'

Page 8, para 6 – misspelling of name – should read P Collyer.

These corrections were agreed and the minutes were then approved as being a correct record of the meeting held on 22 November 2001.

03 / 02 Matters Arising

Page 2 – LEA Strategy and Practice –it was confirmed that the missing pages had now been issued.

Page 3 – Schools Directory – it was confirmed that this was still not available. M Short raised the point that it was now mid- March and the document used to be issued soon after the start of the academic year. He asked if delay was due to proposed introduction electronic version.

J Tagg replied that she had been informed that sickness in the section that produces the document was cause of most recent delay.

Action point: It was agreed that there was a need to know when paper copy of document would be available and arrange distribution to County Secretaries as soon as possible.

Page 3 – A Madgett stated that it was not his query re taxable travel.

T Sadler said that he did have a query that had not been resolved. This concerned travel payments that had been agreed with Inland Revenue as being non-taxable but when claims were processed tax was deducted. T Sadler asked if it was possible for instructions to be sent to schools on how to complete travel forms.

Action point: It was agreed that J Tagg would liaise with J Slee if T Sadler provided written confirmation of the nature of his query.

Page 5 – Collecting Children from School – M Short drew attention to the document that had been issued to schools by C Stevens. The discussion at the last JCC did raise the point that 4.45 was rather late to phone the Social Services helpline.

S Denovan suggested that as C Stevens was to attend for an agenda item this could be addressed later in the meeting.

Page 9 – Cover to Contract Local Agreement – M Harrison said that since this letter had been issued to schools after the last meeting he had not been aware of any issues concerning staff shortages and the provision of cover for lessons. However, very recently he had heard that teachers had been doubling up and heads had been covering vacancies in a variety of ways.

J Tagg said that recruitment did not appear to be an issue at the moment but that it had been in the Autumn term and that it was interesting to hear this comment.

S Denovan said that she was aware that schools had been in contact with the LEA for help in covering through local networks.

I Phillips said that it was not just unfilled vacancies that were causing problems but long term absences due to sickness etc and that supply was extensively used.

There was a short discussion concerning supply usage and the local nature of some supply resources. M Hawkins added that the reintroduction of the Supply Insurance Scheme had proved very useful.

Page 9 – 40/01 Dates of School Terms and Holidays 2003/2004 – J Tagg said that these dates were now on hold pending the outcome of the six term year review.

04/02 Capability Statistics

J Tagg had agreed at the last meeting to provide statistics on use of capability procedures. It had been felt that the use of capability procedures had increased but this was not supported by the figures. A spot check showed that in September 2000 there were 27 live cases, September 2001 25 live cases and as at 12 March 2002 there were 26 live cases. This showed quite a steady figure.

M Short said that it would still be useful to know the total cases per year and breakdown of improvements, dismissals etc. It was important to know if capability cases were linked to recruitment problems, and whether they preceded Ofsted inspections or were higher after inspection.

There was a discussion concerning the effect of inspections and pre-inspections and the way visits often appear to initiate action when in fact Headteachers have been applying informal measures to address problems for some time. S Denovan confirmed that training sessions for Headteachers did target the need to identify problems and to provide support for staff before capability procedures were started.

T Sadler queried the transition between informal and formal procedures, it was not always clear when one stopped and the other started.

I Phillips agreed that local interpretation of the terms ‘informal’ and ‘formal’ often caused confusion and sometimes led to cases where individuals were unaware that they should contact associations for assistance.

J Tagg said that support guidance was already in place in the Personnel Management Handbook and that Personnel Officers always advise that Professional Associations should be contacted in these cases, especially by the time the formal stage was invoked.

M Harrison asked if it was possible to review procedures again. He had recently shown copies to his regional office and had noticed discrepancies between draft and

final documents. It was agreed that he would send details to J Tagg and this would be discussed at the next County Secretaries meeting.

Action point M Harrison to send details to J Tagg, to be agenda item at next County Secretaries Meeting.

05/02 Three Tier Review

J Tagg confirmed that this was now a standing agenda item. The Chief Education Officer had recently held meetings on 13 and 20 March to which County Secretaries of Teaching Associations and a Unison representative had been invited to attend.

The proposals regarding change were due to go to the Education Cabinet in June and then to the Schools Organisation Committee. It was hoped that a letter would be sent to parents and staff at the beginning of the summer term concerning the implications and proposals. However, there were still many decisions to be taken and protocols to be put into place.

M Short agreed that the County Secretaries had had two very constructive and detailed meetings with the CEO but uncertainty will be caused if the question of closure or redesignation was not addressed as soon as possible. The smallest number of closures would effect the smallest number of staff and this would mean being able to concentrate on supporting and helping those staff involved.

M Harrison said that he welcomed the CEO's involvement in meeting with the professional associations and would like to thank him for this. However, he would like to widen the group to more than just County Secretaries to involve staff.

J Tagg said that the picture would be clearer by September once it was known which schools would be involved and which staff would be affected.

J Hawkins said that it was important to give reassurance to staff now.

J Tagg confirmed that letters would go to staff and parents to say that issues are being addressed but that it was not possible to pre-empt the decisions.

M Short appreciated this but would support J Hawkins in the need to reassure staff who were already asking 'when are they going to come and talk to us'.

S Denovan agreed that potentially 700 staff were involved but the CEO was aiming for the least disruptive option.

M Short accepted the CEO's view but would still stress that morale would be affected.

B Knock commented that he had spoken to some of the schools concerned and that there were very positive feelings coming out but staff did feel that their views were not being taken into account.

J Tagg reassured that full consultation would take place with staff once the decisions had been taken. She acknowledged that it could be unsettling for staff but that the discussions and protocols being considered were taking account of staff's views.

06/02 Six Term Year

M Short said that there was nil support for the unworldly, shallow document presented by the Local Government Association. It did not deserve support because it conveniently ignored teachers' contracts. Public holidays would be disruptive if they occur during term-time and this was not joined up thinking.

As an examinations officer he would find the assessment term difficult with a struggle to find space for the various levels of examinations to be taken. Results before university places were available was 'not do-able'.

The two or three day week option was very disruptive with no particular gain. The proposed start date was much too soon as more consultation was needed on a national scale.

J Tagg confirmed that this item had been raised at the County Secretaries meeting and she was aware of the views of the professional associations. Her brief was to consult with all interested bodies and she would therefore welcome a formal response from each association to form basis of the LEA's reply.

M Short said that it was important to remember that teachers' contracts must be reviewed.

J Tagg said that at a recent southwest regional conference the issue of contracts was not really addressed and she agreed that this was important area.

I Phillips said that he had heard that different authorities had not consulted widely on this paper and was therefore concerned to hear feedback that they were close to agreement on proposals.

S Denovan said that the LEA would formally respond by the June deadline. The LEA had not reached agreement yet to accept the proposals, it was dependent on the outcome of consultation.

07/02 Children and Families Learning Project

S Denovan welcomed T Glover and C Nock to the meeting for this item.

C Nock drew attention to the leaflet circulated for information and said that the momentum on the project had gathered pace since January. The second consultation meeting had just taken place and 295 managers had been involved in consultation so far. A management structure was slowly emerging although this was at a very early stage. It was very apparent that staff felt that children's needs should be at the heart of the service and that more support was needed at the 'front line'. He explained that the consultation process was open, active and evidence based. There were other

initiatives around the County that could be incorporated into an integrated service with other service providers.

The five points to be considered were: access points, coherent access and planning, attention on the vulnerable, strengthen local working and collaboration with other agencies.

T Glover said that the more burning issues were for non-teaching staff but it was useful to hear if any issues concerned the 100 or more centrally employed teachers.

The next edition of the newsletter will give an overview of pay and conditions issues, which would involve the Social Services and Education and Libraries Departments. The general perception was that teachers do not work in the holidays and have shorter days. T Glover said that with one foot in each camp it was easier for her to see what each department's perceptions were and the need to educate and dispel any suspicions. All County Secretaries should have had consultation letters, and were asked to raise any queries as soon as they were flagged up.

C Nock confirmed that there was a website where comments could be left and that queries would be answered as soon as possible.

M Short said that there was a sense that this was a very important issue where the 'bones' were awaited and the 'flesh' would appear later.

C Nock said that earlier in the year a 'work shadowing' exercise had taken place for professional staff in Pupil & Student Services which had proved very beneficial to see what others actually did. This idea had been taken on board for more general use.

T Glover confirmed that B Ruddick and P Parsons were taking the lead on this scheme and that the CEO and Social Services were behind this idea. Those interested needed to be targeted and the response would be awaited.

S Denovan thanked T Glover and C Nock for taking time to explain this initiative and would keep the CFL project on the JCC agenda for future meetings.

Action point: CFL project to be on JCC agenda for future meetings.

08/02 Guide to Well Being

J Tagg confirmed that T Pike and S Palmer had been meeting regularly and had done a lot of work on this item as various other related issues were associated with the contents of the proposed leaflet. It was envisaged that the guide would be issued in the Summer Term and was in the process of being 'educationalised'.

09/02 Performance Management

T Sadler stated that he wished this item to be on the agenda for the meeting because NAHT and SHA had strong feelings concerning the lack of adequate funding for threshold payments etc. There was a joint proposal by these associations for action to be taken regarding performance management. NAHT will be negotiating shortly on

action to be taken. The associations wanted to support teachers in their pay progression but feel that adequate funding must be made as decisions on whether teacher's progress to higher salary scale would be unfairly based on funding availability. If action was taken then this would impact on individual's progression.

J Hawkins said that the criteria for assessment was not clear and was putting headteachers in an invidious position. The central funding was only 40% which left 60% to be found from elsewhere.

T Sadler said that the omission of standard criteria could be a way for schools to set their own to match the funding available.

There was a short discussion concerning the problems involved with teachers taking performance points with them when they moved between schools and the funding problems that this created.

J Hawkins said that the CEO and J Scott had attended a recent Headteachers meeting at Bournemouth where morale was raised as being a major problem. The ageing population of teachers ie age 50 or above, will be a real problem before long. Performance management was a great problem, if a teacher had passed through threshold then progression could not be denied.

S Denovan said that she was aware that the CEO was very concerned about the letter which has just gone out to schools regarding their budgets and that the whole funding issue was of national concern.

J Tagg said that she had recently attended a Personnel Officers regional meeting where NEOST had been represented and that other LEAs had raised similar concerns about lack of funding.

J Hawkins thanked J Tagg and S Denovan for this support from the LEA.

T Sadler confirmed that A Batterham had dates of proposed meetings that were to take place to decide if action would be taken. The situation would be clearer at the beginning of the summer term.

10/02 Teaching Assistants Review

J Tagg said that the new job descriptions were in schools, and that salary assimilations were being made by schools with an effective date of 1 April 2002.

M Short queried if the school is the employer and not obliged to follow guidelines would there be a check to see who was not adopting new scales?

J Tagg said that a backtrack would identify who is not doing this. Not adopting new grades could create equal pay issues and it would be necessary to chase up those schools who had not followed guidelines to ensure they were made aware of this.

M Short welcomed this confirmation.

B Knock said that the impact on budgets with salary increases was a potential problem.

I Phillips commented that there was not a lot of difference in the actual hourly rate of new scales and that he had heard of complaints where individuals had undertaken training and had not received the increase in pay that they were led to believe.

J Tagg said that this false expectation of reward had been raised before and that all advisors that led training courses had been informed not to imply that undertaking training would automatically lead to higher pay. Pay rates were linked to the requirements of a particular job.

M Short said that he felt there were various issues concerning use of Teaching Assistants that could perhaps be covered in a special meeting of the County Secretaries to be held later in the summer.

S Denovan thought that this would be a good idea.

Action point; Special meeting to address these issues to be arranged for later in summer.

11/02 Intervention Process

S Denovan referred to the minutes of the last JCC when this item was raised because of issue over 'nothing should be a surprise'.

M Short said that there had been issues over the past few years where discussions had led to changing levels of intervention which were not confirmed in writing. He wondered whether the LEA Ofsted inspection meant that any changes would be made?

S Denovan stated that the Ofsted view was that there was a strategy in place that worked in reducing schools in 'Special Measures' and 'Serious Weakness'. However, it recognised that attention must be on 'prevention is better than cure' and should be widened out to work in partnership to get appropriate support in to do this. A working party has looked at other LEAs on Wiltshire borders to see what they are doing. Oxford, for example, has three advisory headteachers that step in and give support to schools. Wiltshire would like to see the end of intervention, and introduce self-evaluation where schools would be able to recognise when help is needed and do something about it. Creative ways are being looked at to provide support.

T Sadler referred to a recent meeting where this aspect was encouraged and felt that the message needed to be spread across the County. Support between Headteachers was important.

S Denovan agreed to see how message could be spread more widely.

M Short felt that these issues would be raised at the Easter conferences of the associations and that productive partnership with LEA was much more useful than having Ofsted inspections every few years.

12/02 Inclusion Policy

S Denovan welcomed C Stevens to the meeting for this item. As there had been some action points on the minutes from the last JCC she took the opportunity to ask C Stevens before his agenda item.

The minutes referred to draft action plans to be issued for Special Needs Review, but only one plan had been circulated.

C Stevens apologised for this oversight as three did exist for each level of special needs provision, he would arrange for the others to be sent out.

Action point: C Stevens to issue other draft plans for special needs provision.

S Denovan also raised the earlier query concerning Collecting Children from School, ie the time quoted for contacting Social Services.

C Stevens explained that he had used the time recommended by Social Service of 4.45pm. He appreciated the comments that 'one hour after end of school' would reflect an earlier time and that this would give Social Services more time to action any calls. He confirmed that he had in fact received several calls from schools following the issue of these guidelines concerning the time stated.

It was agreed that C Stevens would consult again with Social Services and would review the statement concerning time to phone. If there were no objections then wording could be amended to 'one hour after the end of school and at latest by 4.45'.

Action point: C Stevens to consult with Social Services and issue amendment to schools concerning time to phone.

S Denovan thanked C Stevens for his help in sorting out these points.

C Stevens stated that the Ofsted report on the LEA had said that a major area of weakness was the lack of overall overarching special educational needs plan. The idea to address this was to try to develop a 'stakeholder' group of interested parties to look at special educational needs from the 'outside'. The CEO and J Scott were both behind this new approach and the aim was now to set up such a group, draw up an inclusion policy, an action plan and provide a map of special needs provision in Wiltshire and to develop the role of specialist centres.

Educational behavioural difficulties are the biggest issue that concerns all schools. The CEO feels that it is inappropriate to write an inclusion policy now and that it is important to get the group up and running to look at this and to identify how such a plan could be resourced. It was hoped that the new stakeholder group would include teacher association representatives, this would need to be addressed within the next two weeks.

M Short said that it would be useful if the association representative could be a teacher in the classroom who would deal with these issues everyday.

There was a discussion concerning who would be most appropriate to be representative. It was agreed that C Stevens would write to M Short, A S Leggate and M Harrison and that M Short would co-ordinate their response.

S Denovan thanked C Stevens for attending the meeting to update on this item.

13/02 Consultation

S Denovan circulated a document to the meeting that L Cox had prepared. This was a draft document which listed proposals 'to simplify consultation mechanisms' following the recommendations of the Ofsted inspection. The main point of interest for the JCC was the directory of consultation groups.

M Short said that the real need was for a net based directory as there were constant changes. At the last pre-meeting association representatives identified several consultation groups where JCC representation was not included. M Short had met with L Cox since the last meeting to give the meeting's views on groups where no representation was included. There were also issues where WASSH were represented but not SHA or NAHT. It would be helpful if L Cox could give some feedback on whether these points had been actioned.

S Denovan suggested that L Cox be invited to the next meeting to give an update on the progress of the directory.

Action point: L Cox to be invited to next meeting for this agenda item.

14/02 Advanced Skills Teachers Working Party

S Denovan confirmed that the working party was to meet on 30 April. N Glass, General Secondary Adviser, was taking the lead for the LEA. The group would initially be looking at good practice, Beacon Schools and Advanced Skills Teachers. There would need to be internal LEA meetings before this date to pull all this together and this item should be on the agenda for the next JCC.

Action point: Advanced Skills Working Party to be on agenda of next JCC and ask N Glass to attend.

15/02 Travel Payments for Peripatetic Music Teachers

M Short said that although he had asked for this item to be put on the agenda he had been unable to contact the member concerned to identify the exact nature of the query. It was agreed that the item would be raised at a future date if necessary.

16/02 Any other urgent business

As there were no further items to discuss the meeting then closed.

Jccmar02/Sjb.21.3.02

